



General Assembly

January Session, 2007

Raised Bill No. 6994

LCO No. 3480

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Referred to Committee on Planning and Development

Introduced by:
(PD)

AN ACT CONCERNING PRIORITY IN MAKING OPEN SPACE GRANTS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Subsection (a) of section 7-131e of the general statutes is
2 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*
3 *1, 2007*):

4 (a) Grant award decisions under the protected open space and
5 watershed land acquisition grant program established under section
6 7-131d or under the Charter Oak open space grant program
7 established under section 7-131t shall be made by the Commissioner of
8 Environmental Protection at least semiannually. All complete and
9 eligible grant applications shall be acted upon by the commissioner as
10 soon as practicable. A single project may receive a grant in more than
11 one grant cycle, subject to future availability of funds and subject to
12 the limitations set forth in this section and sections 23-78, 12-498 and
13 7-131d. Up to two per cent of the grant funds may be used for
14 administrative expenses including, but not limited to: (1) Contractors
15 to assist the Department of Environmental Protection in the review
16 and evaluation of grant proposals and baseline data collection for

17 conservation easements; (2) appraisals or appraisal reviews; and (3)
18 preparation of legal and other documents. Administrative expenses
19 may not be used for staff salaries. Not later than September 1, 1998, for
20 the protected open space and watershed land acquisition grant
21 program established under section 7-131d, and not later than
22 September 1, 2000, for the Charter Oak open space grant program
23 account established under section 7-131t, the commissioner shall
24 develop written guidelines and a ranking system for consistency and
25 equity in the distribution of grant awards under the protected open
26 space and watershed land acquisition grant program established under
27 section 7-131d or under the Charter Oak open space grant program
28 account established under section 7-131t based on the criteria listed in
29 subsections (b) and (c) of section 7-131d. Consistent with such criteria,
30 additional consideration shall be given to: (A) Protection of lands
31 adjacent to and complementary to adjacent protected open space land
32 or class I or class II water company lands; (B) equitable geographic
33 distribution of the grants; (C) proximity of a property to urban areas
34 with growth and development pressures or to areas with open space
35 deficiencies and underserved populations; (D) protection of land
36 particularly vulnerable to development incompatible with its natural
37 resource values including the protection of a public water supply
38 source; (E) consistency with the state's plan of conservation and
39 development; (F) multiple protection elements, such as water quality
40 and supply protection, scenic preservation and farmland preservation;
41 (G) the extent to which the presence of already constructed buildings
42 or other manmade improvements diminish or overshadow the natural
43 resource value of a proposed acquisition, or its value relative to its
44 cost; and (H) preservation of forest lands and bodies of water which
45 naturally absorb significant amounts of carbon dioxide.
46 Notwithstanding such criteria, in making grants under sections 7-131d
47 and 7-131t the commissioner shall give priority to municipalities that
48 have zoning and subdivision regulations that provide for cluster
49 development, as defined in section 8-18.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

Section 1	July 1, 2007	7-131e(a)
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Statement of Purpose:

To give municipalities with land use regulations encouraging cluster development priority for open space grants.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]